



NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative Mark Finchem (R-11)

Representative Jill Norgaard (R-18)

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Wednesday, January 25, 2017
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Representatives Finchem and Norgaard Introduce Legislation to Significantly Restructure Arizona Board of Regents

STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX – Representatives Mark Finchem (R-11) and Jill Norgaard (R-18) have introduced HB 2359, which would improve local control of public universities by creating a governing board for each institution.

Unsatisfied by the lack of fiscal restraint shown by the Arizona Board of Regents (ABOR), the legislation would create local governing boards for each university, comprised of five members serving four-year terms.

The legislation brings clarity to the definitions of general oversight and direct oversight, and incorporates tighter business accountability controls intended to gain control over what is perceived by many lawmakers as out of control spending and a lack of accountability.

Each governing board would provide direct oversight of its corresponding university through monthly business reviews. The local boards would also appoint university presidents, approve senior staff hires, fix tuition and fees, submit budget requests, approve curricula, award diplomas, and conduct other direct supervision duties currently fulfilled by ABOR. ABOR will continue to serve in a general oversight role as an advisory body over the entire public university system and provide recommendations to the local university governing boards.

Local governing board members would receive a stipend for their work and reimbursement for mileage expense.

“While ABOR owes its existence to the Arizona Constitution, the Constitution also says that a college education ‘shall be as nearly free as possible.’ It is clear that ABOR has not focused on that constitutional imperative, and as the appropriations authority, it is time for the Legislature to step in and restore accountability. The average mid-range business CEO

in Arizona is paid a little over \$172,000, yet there are hundreds of university staff positions that are paid nearly twice that,” said Representative Finchem. “Not only will restructuring public university oversight put Arizona on a more sound fiscal footing, but it will also improve the quality and delivery of education at our universities and reduce the cost of higher education for our kids.”

“This is a critical step in the right direction to increases accountability in our state university system and return to a more locally-controlled body. Education is not one-size-fits-all, and we shouldn’t allow for one group to use a blanketed approach to managing all three of our state higher-learning institutions,” said Representative Norgaard. “With these excessively large salaries appearing year-after-year, it is time we transition ABOR into purely an advisory role and remove their ability to mandate fiscal decrees, which directly impact the taxpayer.”

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